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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

JAMIE CLOVER ADAMS
DIRECTOR

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI)

PROGRAM GOAL

The overall goal of the Strategic Growth Initiative Grant Program is to increase the economic impact of the Food and Agriculture Industry in Michigan.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Strategic Growth Initiative (SGI) is an outcome of the Governor's Summit on production agriculture held in August 2011 and is in response to the recommendations from the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Agricultural Processing.

The SGI is a new state / Industry partnership that is a collaboration of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

Applications for grant funds should describe how the project potentially impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the food and agriculture industry and/or the public rather than a single organization, institution, or individual.

Grant funds will not be awarded for projects that solely benefit a particular commercial product or provide a profit to a single organization, institution, or individual. Single organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

This initiative has been developed to focus on removing existing barriers and leveraging opportunities identified by food processors, agri-business, and those in agricultural production as critical to business development and growth. Additionally, a priority is to coordinate and cooperate with universities and other research organizations to bring the latest technology and information to Michigan to improve the food and agriculture industry.

IMPLEMENTATION

The MDARD Director has formed an advisory board consisting of food and agriculture industry representatives who have been charged with identifying barriers and opportunities for growth and establishing priorities.

The funding for SGI will be distributed via a request for proposal (RFP) process and evaluated through competitive scoring. This Initiative will identify ways to validate new and improved innovations for emerging issues and allow for the sharing of information to benefit the industry and stakeholders.

Each grantee is required to identify program outcomes and performance metrics that contribute to the industry's five goals:

- increasing the economic impact of the food and agriculture industry
- increasing agriculture exports
- increasing food and agricultural jobs
- improving access to healthy foods
- increasing sustainable food and agriculture systems

GRANT CATEGORIES

Your primary category must be indicated on your application.

Activities appropriate for the SGI program include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Workforce Development**
 1. Providing food technology/safety/processing
 2. Educational programs (including distance learning),
 3. Recruitment programs internships, on the job training
 4. Business marketing
 5. Specific technical training to meet industry needs
- **Technical Assistance**
 1. Energy efficiency/ utilities
 2. Alternative energy
 3. Feasibility studies
 4. Implementation of facility planning and/or design (i.e. new technology, new equipment)
- **Applied Research and/or Commercialization**
 1. The improvement of electronic systems, such as and for the purpose of value-added processing
 2. Packaging and processing technologies
 3. Implementing and developing waste management/recycling systems as it relates to agriculture or agricultural products
 4. Water technology
 5. New equipment systems and optimization
- **Value Added Processing**
 1. Increasing grower/producer revenue, production and efficiency, or reducing expenses

2. Logistics
 3. Implementing approved food safety and handling techniques
 4. Enhancing product value and sales
- **Exporting**
 1. Maximum residue levels (MRL) guidelines, reporting
 2. Bio- engineered products
 3. Allergens
 4. Food fraud/integrity
 5. Logistics

CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

- MDARD will solicit proposals for projects that enhance the competitiveness and growth of the Michigan Food and Agriculture industry
- Applicants must be legal entities recognized by the IRS and a registered vendor with the State of Michigan. To register with the state of Michigan please go to: http://michigan.gov/documents/CPE-OFMv_137948_7.pdf
- Each grant award is capped at \$250,000. However, the Department will consider proposals that exceed the cap so long as they demonstrate substantial, positive impact on the food and agriculture industry.
- It is the intent of the program to award grants to a variety of entities across the food and agriculture sector in Michigan. Scoring criteria includes the evaluation on the reasonableness of the budget.
- Applications for grant funds should demonstrate how the project impacts and produces measurable outcomes for the industry rather than a single organization, institution, or individual. Grant funds will not be available for projects that directly benefit a single organization.
- Partnerships with out of state service providers are acceptable however the applicant must have a Michigan address and be doing business in Michigan.
- Only two applications per entity are eligible for consideration. For higher education institutions, an entity would be a single department. (ie. Horticulture, Plant Pathology)
- This is a cost reimbursement program. Progress reports are linked to payments and you will be required to provide sufficient receipts of payment for work completed. MDARD is not liable for any costs incurred by any applicant prior to signing the Contract by all parties.

- A Joint Evaluation Committee will review proposals and recommend projects for award to the MDARD Director.
- The Director of Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development will have final authority to approve or not approve grant awards, based upon selection criteria, program priorities and application instructions.
- Indirect costs are not allowable under this grant program. There is not a match requirement to receive grant funding. If you are using match dollars to fund a portion of activities, please indicate and demonstrate in your budget.
- Grant proposal(s) - Please complete the provided application. The application format must be followed or application is subject to disqualification.
- Grant period will be December 1, 2013, through June 30, 2015. Work on your project must be completed by May 31, 2015 and cannot begin until a signed grant agreement is in place on or about December 1, 2013.
- Failure to comply with MDARD reporting requirements may result in forfeiture of current and potential future grant funding.
- Applications **must** be limited to ten (10) pages - 8½" x 11", with not less than 12-point Arial font and 1-inch margins in a word format. Letters of Support do not count toward the page count.
- Proposals must be received by **Wednesday, October 2, 2013 at 3pm** and will not be accepted if received after that deadline. Applications must be sent in a WORD document electronically to MDA-Grants@michigan.gov.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

MDARD Contacts – Mike DiBernardo: 517-242-3021 or dibernardom@michigan.gov or Nancy Nyquist: 517-241-4381 or nyquistn@michigan.gov.